

Union Station
North Royal Street
Jackson
Madison County
Tennessee

HABS No. TN-184

HABS
TENN
57 JACSO,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C.

HABS
TENN
57-JACSD,
1-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

UNION STATION
(Union Depot)

HABS No. TN-184

Location: North Royal Street, Jackson, Madison County, Tennessee.
Latitude: 35° 37' 14" Longitude: 88° 47' 42"

Present Owner: Illinois Central Gulf Railroad.

Present Use: Vacant; railroad offices which occupied the second floor have moved in August, 1972.

Significance: The Union Station, built in the 1870s, is a typical example of the small town railroad station which is rapidly disappearing from the American scene. It literally emphasized the union of the two railroads by being located between the two merging lines. Its dual waiting rooms served their respective railroads.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Between June 1876 and August, 1877.
2. Architect: Unknown; probably the chief or assistant engineer of the Mobile and Ohio Railroad (which had owned the property and had its old depot there for over twenty years). For a similar case in Tupelo, Mississippi see the Jackson Daily Whig, September 22, 1899; plans and specifications provided by H. W. Seib, then Assistant Engineer of the Mobile and Ohio Railroad at Mobile, were offered for prospective contractors to bid on. This was also to be a union depot (with the Kansas City, Memphis and Birmingham Railroad).
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following chain of title may be established from the Register of Deeds of Madison County. The early deed was only for a part of the Depot grounds (all of which was originally Mobile and Ohio Railroad property); the other part was not located in the Register of Deeds prior to the 1878 entry.

1854 Deed June 24, 1854 recorded June 29, 1870 in
Book 28 page 60 (part of the Mobile and Ohio depot grounds)
W. H. Long
to
Mobile and Ohio Railroad

- 1873 Deed April 19, 1873 recorded August 14, 1874 in
Book 32 page 400 (right of way to northeast from Mobile
and Ohio
T. D. Theus
to
Mississippi Central Railroad Company
- 1878 Deed January 28, 1878 recorded November 28, 1879 in
Book 37 page 152 (north half of brick depot building)
Chicago, St. Louis and New Orleans Railroad Company
to
Mobile and Ohio Railroad Company
- 1878 Deed January 28, 1878 recorded January 28, 1878 in
Book 36 page 571 (south half of brick building)
Mobile and Ohio Railroad Company
to
Chicago, St. Louis and New Orleans Railroad Company

4. Alterations and additions: The main building is essentially unaltered except for interior remodeling on the second floor with lowered ceilings, more office partitions, and the like. This was done in July, 1959. The two controlling companies erected umbrella sheds for passengers on both sides of the building in 1910; these have been removed. The north and south one-story additions were probably later added.

- B. Historical Context: The earliest located reference to this structure is in the Jackson Sun, August 24, 1877; it refers to a ticket agent at the Union Depot. The two lines did not cross until 1873, and a lengthy article in the same newspaper for June 10, 1876 makes no mention of the Union Depot in summarizing the history of rail transportation in the city. The 1878 deeds (in which the two companies exchange ends of the depot with one another) carry an accurately measured location for the depot; this was checked against the Gulf, Mobile and Ohio track map for Mile 386 (north of Mobile) and it coincides with the location and size of the present structure.

The Illinois Central (successor to the Chicago, St. Louis and New Orleans and to the Mississippi Central at this location) merged with the Gulf, Mobile and Ohio (successor to the Mobile and Ohio) in 1972 during the course of this HABS project. The Illinois Central Gulf Railroad is the result of the corporate union of the lines which had their depot on a union basis nearly a hundred years earlier. The depot has been all but abandoned; the last Gulf, Mobile and Ohio passenger run through Jackson was in 1959, and the Illinois Central moved its passenger service to the freight yard southwest of town in 1961. At this time the benches and similar fixtures were removed from the ground floor.

Mention should be made of two local railroad men whose careers were associated with the depot. Milton Brown was President of the Mobile and Ohio before, during and after the Civil War; the line had to be almost completely rebuilt under his leadership because of the wartime destruction. Isaac B. Tigrett assimilated a number of floundering branch lines into the small but solvent Gulf, Mobile and Northern, of which he had become President in 1920; he managed the merger of this line with the insolvent but larger Mobile and Ohio in 1940, creating the Gulf, Mobile and Ohio. An innovator in the railroad business, Tigrett managed the company successfully until 1954.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The structure is a typical example of a small town railroad station. The design is simple - a rectangular shape and common architectural elements (gable roof, double-hung windows, etc.).
2. Condition of fabric: The building has some superficial deterioration but is otherwise structurally sound.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The building measures 35'-0" x 161'-0". It is nine bays long and three bays wide, and is two stories high. The plan is a simple rectangle. There are also the additions: one-story addition (one-bay front x two bays) on the south end and one-story addition (two-bay front x three bays) on the north end.
2. Foundations: Not recorded.
3. Walls: Brick. The walls are divided into panels with a chimney projection which delineates the wall like pilasters. These chimneys mark the bays.
4. Structural system, framing: The building is of brick bearing wall construction with wood joists and roof rafters.
5. Porches: An exterior stairway is the only service to the second floor. It is situated at the center of the east wall, and it is set against the wall. There are twenty-one risers up from south to north. They measure 7-1/2" with treads of 10-1/4" x 4'-6-1/2". They have a simple 2"x4" rail and balusters.

There are canopy projections on the east and west sides. They provide shelter from the waiting room doors to the trains. Those on the east side are located at the third and seventh bays and

extend out one bay or approximately 18'. Those on the west are similarly located and extend out northwesterly from the wall (i.e., they are perpendicular to the tracks and not to the building). The northern canopy extends one bay or about 18' while the southern one extend three bays or 48'. The canopies are supported by round columns with angle braces.

6. Chimneys: There are eight chimneys along the exterior walls on both the east and west sides. They correspond to the bay demarcation. They stand about 5' above the roof and are of brick.

There are also two chimneys along the gable ends, also delineating the walls.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: In the third, fifth and seventh bays (from north to south) on each side are doorways to the waiting rooms and to the ticket rooms. The 3'-5-1/2" x 7'-1" doors are flanked by sidelights and topped with a transom. The second floor door is 2'-9" x 7'-4" with four lights over three horizontal panels.

There is also a service door in the ninth bay (northern end of the building), either side, and it has simple wood double doors and simple door hardware.

- b. Windows: First floor windows occur in the alternate bays. They are 5'-0" wide x 5'-9" high double-hung windows with two horizontal lights in each sash. They also have brick elliptical heads.

Second floor windows are the only ones with segmental arches, and they measure 3'-8" x 8'-2" and have 2/2 double-hung wood sash.

The double-hung windows in the one-story additions are 4'-0" x 8'-2" with 2/2 lights.

Other windows are narrow and some still have their 2/2 double-hung wood sash.

8. Roof: There is a simple gable roof running the length of the station. It has asphalt shingles. There is a 5-1/2' overhang, the soffits of which are board.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: The station has two waiting rooms (one for each of the rail lines it served). Between the waiting rooms were the ticket offices. At the opposite ends were public toilets. At the far south end of the building was the baggage room with the mail room at the north end.
- b. Second floor: The second floor has a central hall flanked by offices on each side. The corridor is divided by a doorway into two halls. A hall perpendicular to the main corridor gives access to the exterior stairway (there are no interior stairways).

2. Flooring: Wood and asphalt tile flooring. The first floor has 3-1/4" boards.

3. Wall and ceiling finish: Wood lath and plaster. First floor is trimmed with 4'-5" masonite wainscot and acoustical tiles. Central hall has a 2'-9-1/2" wood wainscot. Other walls have wood siding.

Ceiling heights: First floor, 10'-11"; second floor, 13'-5".

4. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: Interior doors are 3'-0" x 7'-3" x 1-1/2" and have four wood panels. The doors are topped with two-light transoms.

Interior window sill height is 1'-9".

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The station is located in the industrial section of town. It stands between the converging railroad tracks which meet to the north of the buildings. The station is parallel to the tracks located on east and it stands about 40 feet back.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Register of Deeds of Madison County, Tennessee. Property records. Place of repository not indicated.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Baum, Arthur W., "The Hesitant Hero of Jackson," Saturday Evening Post (March 1, 1947).

Tigrett, Isaac Burton. My Railroad Saga. Princeton: For the Newcomen Publications in North America, Princeton University Press, 1952.

Newspaper articles:

Jackson Sun, August 24, 1877.

Jackson Daily Whig. September 22, 1899.

Prepared by: Robert C. Giebner
Project Supervisor
HABS West Tennessee
Project
Summer 1972

Richard H. Hulan
Project Historian
HABS West Tennessee
Project
Summer 1972

Edited by: Susan McCown
HABS Historian
Spring 1985

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This 1972 project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Tennessee Historical Commission and the West Tennessee Historical Society. Under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, the project was completed by Robert C. Giebner (University of Arizona), project supervisor, and Richard H. Hulan, project historian (Nashville).

Jack E. Boucher, HABS staff photographer, took the photographs of the depot in March 1974.

The written data was edited in the Spring of 1985 by Susan McCown, HABS architectural historian in the Washington, D.C. office, for transmittal to the Library of Congress.